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IX.

CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE.

- 1.—*Wilhelm Gesenius's Hebräisches und Chaldäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament.* Achte Auflage, neu bearbeitet von F. MÜHLAU und H. VOLCK, ordentlichen Professoren der Theologie in Dorpat. Erste Hälfte. Leipsic: C. W. Vogel, 1877.

GESENIUS'S "Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon" made its first appearance three-quarters of a century ago, and it has till this day maintained its standing as the best manual of its kind in this branch of the Semitic languages. The author himself, who died in 1842, revised it three times, and left it, it is not too much to say, a master-work of lexicography. The last complete revised edition is that of 1868, by Dietrich. The only Hebrew lexicographer who has ventured to vie with Gesenius in his field is Julius Fürst; but, though endowed with extensive philological knowledge and vast powers for work, he lacked the moderation, solidity, and soundness of the critical faculty, the stamp of which is seen on almost every page of Gesenius's numerous productions. Though deserving of credit for his additions to the stores of Old Testament lexicography, Fürst failed to supersede his master.

Yet, although holding its place, Gesenius's lexicon has been considerably changed in the editions produced after his death, and the reason is obvious. Semitic philology is a field on which very diligent research, with rich results, has been carried on in the last third of a century. Old Testament criticism has had new stores opened to it by unearthings on the cognate grounds of Egyptology and Assyriology. Theories and views change, and authorities supersede authorities. It is the task of every successive edition to place the work on the last level, to make it fresh "to date." The additions and modifications are, rightly or not, inserted in the old text, instead of being appended in notes; and it is only owing to the extraordinary merits of the original work, especially in parts less exposed to the influx of new discovery, that, as a whole, it still fully deserves to be called by the name of its author, even in the eighth edition, the

first half of which is now before us. We will compare this with the last by Gesenius himself, issued in 1834, and in this country translated by Robinson.

Ur, the *Ur* of the Chaldees, appears in the old edition as "a town of Mesopotamia," mentioned by Ammianus, "between Nisibis and the Tigris;" in the new it is "the *Uru* of the Assyrians, now *El-Mugheir*, south of Babylon."

Caphtor, to Gesenius, is "most probably *Crete*," as Michaelis explained it; his editors, after Ebers, think it designated "probably a coast-strip of Northern Egypt."

Gesenius's "probable" derivation of *A'hashdarpenim* is, after De Sacy, from the Persian *Kshetr*, province, and *ban*, guardian; the new edition substitutes for these words, after Haug, *Kshatra* and *páwan*, though with the same meanings.

A'hashteranim, according to the old edition, signifies "mules, from the Persian *estár*;" according to the new, "horses, probably in an adjective form, meaning the *lordly*." The latter explanation is hardly tenable.

Gamal (camel) is, according to Gesenius, probably derived from the corresponding Arabic root signifying *to bear*; according to Profs. Mùhlau and Volck, "undoubtedly" from a similar root signifying *to be perfect, to be beautiful*, the strangeness of which derivation is extenuated by the high estimate in which the animal is held by the Orientals.

Most of the Hebrew names beginning with the component part *abi* or *a'hi* are almost all differently explained in the two editions. In the old, *Abihail*, *Abitub*, *Abinoam*, *Abiezer*, *Ahitub*, *Ahiezer*, are explained by "father of strength," "father of goodness," "father of grace," "father of help," "friend of goodness," "brother of help;" in the new, by "my father is strength," "my father is goodness," "my father is grace," "my father is help," "my brother is goodness," "my brother is help."

Taking both lists of names referred to, we have no hesitation to say that, on the whole, we prefer the original explanations, although, of course, both the original and the old can rest only on the vaguest kind of conjecture, since the ancient Hebrews, in forming and selecting names, in order to distinguish them from words of common parlance, almost always adopted strange forms and combinations, under which allusions to domestic relations and momentary circumstances were variously hidden. Altogether, great as is the advantage which the new edition has above the old on account of its very newness,

and greatly as we appreciate the fullness of research and correctness of execution which make it a worthy continuation of the labors of an admirable scholar, we yet advise all earnest students of Hebrew not to neglect consulting the old guide from absolute reliance on the newest. The "two are better than one."

2.—*Von Reumont's History of Tuscany. Geschichte Toscana's seit dem Ende des florentinischen Freistaates.* Von ALFRED VON REUMONT. Erster Theil: Die Medici. 1530–1737. Zweiter Theil: Geschichte Toscana's unter dem Hause Lothringen-Habsburg. 1737–1859. Gotha: F. A. Perthes. 1876, 1877. 8vo, pp. xviii.–654, xix.–681, Register 74.

THE popular history of Tuscany ends with the fall of the Florentine Commonwealth in 1530. Few of the modern historians have cared to prolong their labors beyond this date. Napier's "Florentine History" (London, 1847, 6 vols.) extends to the accession of Ferdinand III. in 1790, and a supplementary chapter continues the fate of the state to 1824. T. A. Trollope ends his "History of the Commonwealth of Florence" (London, 1865, 4 vols.) with the siege and surrender of the city in 1530; and the latest native historian, Gino Capponi, closes with the year 1532, the more correct date of the fall of Florentine liberty, which, in a feeble way, survived the siege two years.* The most recent history of Florence, by F. E. Perrens, "Histoire de Florence" (Paris, 1877, 3 vols. thus far issued) will also end with the commonwealth. The author intends, however, in a final volume, to trace the history of the remains of the republic during the principality, and gives in his preface his excuse for not continuing his history through the reign of the Medici, "une ville qui n'est plus qu'une résidence princière n'est qu'une ville morte." These words explain the want of a complete history of Florence, a want which the work of Von Reumont so tardily but so perfectly supplies.

There is, it is true, a falling off in the interest of the history of the city (which was also the state) after it had ceased to be a republic, but it is going too far to say that Florence, under the Medici, was a "dead city," or that it at once lost its personality as a state. It was not until the government passed from the hands of its own princes into those of a foreign line that Tuscany can be said to have lost its importance as a state. If the historian is to pause

* For a notice of his "Storia della Repubblica di Firenze," Florence, 1875, 2 vols., see the NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, October, 1875.